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MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties

From: Eileen Swan, Executive Director

Date: August 3, 2006

Re: Updated files, description of proposed map changes to the Preliminary State Plan Policy Map and Draft Schedule to Begin Negotiations with Counties

Abstract: This is an updated and expanded version of the memo that was distributed to counties by CD during the week of July 23rd and a version posted on the OSG web site earlier this week. It is intended to explain the nature of the GIS files more fully, and to notify interested parties that slightly modified files are now available on our website for download. The nature of the file modification is that where the county environmental changes overlapped the new environmental analysis conducted by OSG & DEP have now been fully integrated and labeled as to classification of Planning Area or CES. Some missing and incomplete environmental source information was also completed.

The New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) and the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) have proposed changes to the Preliminary State Plan Policy Map. The proposed changes are available on the OSG website at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/osg>. The changes are based upon additional environmental information provided to the SPC and OSG. These data were analyzed and incorporated into the Preliminary State Plan Policy Map by the GIS unit at OSG in a manner that conforms to State Plan mapping protocols.

The changes fall into several categories. Most significant are adjustments to existing Planning Area boundaries which designate additional environmentally sensitive Planning Areas, as either PA 5 or PA 4B. There are also minor changes to Planning Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 which are necessary to maintain conformity with established SPC mapping protocols while incorporating the additional identified environmental features.

A significant amount of the mapping changes represent areas where county requests for additional environmentally sensitive designations and data from the DEP analysis coincide. Finally, there are a number of areas that because of their size or unique nature, are best handled through the Plan Endorsement process. This last category has not yet been subjected to the same quality control by the OSG's GIS unit as the remainder of the data and will be addressed within future Endorsements.

The changes have been aggregated into 3 statewide files:

PACHanges; Proposed Planning Area changes.

CESChanges; Proposed CES additions.

ENDChanges; Environmentally sensitive areas identified for consideration during the Plan Endorsement process.

A fourth file 'Open05' showing known preserved open space/parks is also available for downloading. This file helps to explain various gaps in the other files that are already preserved within that framework.

The methodology utilized to make these changes is set forth in the metadata that accompanies the GIS files. In summary, identified environmentally sensitive polygons were hand digitized capturing NJDEP environmental data forming clusters that are adjacent to existing Rural (PA 4), Rural Environmentally Sensitive (PA 4B), Environmentally Sensitive (PA 5) Planning Areas or that meet the OSG mapping criteria for a Planning Area size of 1 square mile. Additionally, important environmental feature clusters smaller than 1 square mile and not adjacent to a PA 4, PA 4B, and PA 5 were identified as environmentally sensitive polygons. The majority of polygon boundaries were ground features that form recognizable breaks including fence lines, roads, power lines, railways, or other obvious linear features or edges of previously mapped environmental features such as the DEP ;Landscape Project.'

The features that led to identification of areas as environmentally sensitive were: a) Category 1 streams and their storm water buffers; b) Natural Heritage Priority Sites; c) Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat (Landscape Project rank 3, 4 or 5); d) Wetlands within PA 1, PA 2, PA 3 and Designated Centers. Areas exhibiting these features and their surrounding habitat were designated for classification as an environmentally sensitive area. More detailed information concerning the mapping can be found further on in this document.

Also available on the OSG website is a copy of a proposed schedule for finishing Cross-Acceptance in a timely fashion. The timeframe is very aggressive, yet sufficient consideration has been given to provide the counties with an opportunity to analyze the new information and take appropriate measures to respond. Additionally, OSG will be flexible in moving the process forward to allow for additional time as necessary and within reasonable bounds.

Cross-Acceptance has been stalled for a considerable period of time. Incorporation of this data was a significant factor in bringing Cross-Acceptance to a halt. We are looking forward to re-starting Cross-Acceptance and advancing the process to completion in an expedited manner. OSG will be holding internal meetings, beginning immediately, regarding each individual county. In September, we will begin to hold interagency meetings with the various interested state departments to address issues of particular concern to each individual county. We will then begin to hold staff-to-staff meetings with each county here at OSG beginning in mid-September. We will then schedule public negotiation sessions in each county, about 4 weeks after the staff-to-staff meeting is held. We will follow this schedule until all 21 counties have been addressed.

The incorporation of this new data is important from a number of standpoints. First and foremost, allowing the state planning process to move forward without integrating known information was not an option, nor would it constitute sound planning policy. Second, for the State Plan to provide greater predictability and to serve as a more effective planning tool, it must do a better job of reflecting where growth can or cannot take place. The addition of this information enhances that aspect of the plan. Finally, in order for the State Plan to deliver any number of benefits in terms of prioritization of funding or expedited processes, it will be necessary for all state agencies to have confidence that the State Plan serves as a credible basis for planning. The addition of this data is a major step forward in achieving that outcome. We will be working extremely hard in the coming months to make that final long promised point a reality.

I am committed to moving the process forward in the best manner possible for all parties involved. My staff and I will take whatever steps within our abilities necessary to complete the Cross-Acceptance

process in a way that is both credible and valuable to adopting a revised State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Finishing Cross-Acceptance is a pre-requisite, not only for completing the plan, but for moving on to the innovative and effective policy initiatives that will be necessary to insure that New Jersey is a vital, competitive and attractive place to live and work in the future.

Excerpted metadata from the 'PAChanges' file follows as an example of a more detailed explanation of the files-

Abstract: This file has been developed in order to show additional areas that should be considered for an environmental classification during the State Plan Cross Acceptance Process. The file maps results of a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection GIS analysis of the Third Preliminary New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) - Preliminary State Plan Policy Map (NJPSDRP).

The NJPSDRP was overlaid with environmental features based on the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's environmental spatial data. That data was then evaluated and amended to achieve a form that could be integrated into the NJPSDRP within the mapping guidelines as set forth by the State Planning Commission as Planning Area changes or as Critical Environmental Sites (CES). The boundaries will be used during the Cross Acceptance process to amend the boundaries of the NJPSDRP. The State Plan's Statewide Policies are applied to the natural and built resources of the state through the designation of five Planning Areas. These Planning Areas reflect distinct geographic and economic units within the state and serve as an organizing framework for application of the Statewide Policies of the State Plan. Planning Areas are areas of land, not less than one square mile, that share certain conditions, such as population density, infrastructure systems, level of development, or environmental sensitivity. Planning Areas do not necessarily coincide with municipal or county boundaries, but define geographic areas that are suitable for common application of public policy. The State Plan anticipates continued growth throughout New Jersey in all Planning Areas. The character, location and magnitude of this growth vary among Planning Areas according to the specific character of the area. Each Planning Area has Policy Objectives that guide growth in the context of its unique qualities and conditions. The Policy Objectives also shape and define the application of the Statewide Policies in each Planning Area. Refer to the NJSDRP for further description of the geographic nature of Planning Areas.

Methodology: NJDEP used a number of files including Digital Orthophotography, Landscape Project, Water bodies, etc. to identify areas within the NJPSDRP that should be considered for change to an environmentally sensitive map classification. OSG then reviewed the file, adjusted boundaries for accuracy, appropriateness and feasibility for integration into the NJPSDRP. OSG attempted to insert as much of the data as Env. Sensitive Planning Area (PA5) as possible. Otherwise, the area was recommended for the Rural Env. Sens. Planning Area (PA4b) or a Critical Env. Site (CES). There were places where the Planning Area change would fragment other areas, so some of those areas were changed to an adjacent classification when it was judged reasonable. It should be noted that this file contains areas where county mapping has already requested a change to an environmentally sensitive Planning Area or what is termed an intersection or overlap.

Process Description:

1) Polygon construction was digitized over the NJDEP 2002 Ortho Photos. These aerial photos were the base layer reference throughout the GIS overlay analysis and polygon development.

2) NJDEP environmental data: a) Category 1 streams and their storm water buffers; b) Natural Heritage Priority Sites; c) Threatened and endangered species habitat (Landscape Project rank 3,4,5); d) Wetlands shape files were overlain within PA1, PA2, PA3 and Designated Centers. Environmental features forming clusters were then photo interpreted to the 2002 aerial photos. If the characteristics indicated that the area was environmentally sensitive by both the data clustering aspect and photography the section was digitized into a general polygon respectively

depicting a suggested PA4, PA4b, PA5 or CES change.

4) Suggested Planning Area polygons then were reselected and valued with the appropriate environmental feature descriptions. These descriptions are general to the polygon, for specific feature boundaries refer to individual source data at the NJDEP website <http://www.nj.gov/dep/gis/crossaccept.htm>.